

This brochure serves as an excellent reference for information on recreational off-highway vehicles, utility vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, and motorized bicycles. Patrol members regularly present programs on traffic safety to civic groups, schools, clubs, etc. If your group would like such a program, please contact the public information and education officer at the troop headquarters nearest you, or the Public Information and Education Division at (573) 526-6115.




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Published By:

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SHP-448 G 3/2021





The Missouri State Highway Patrol has issued this reference guide to help explain Missouri laws pertaining to recreational off-highway vehicles, utility vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, and motorized bicycles. If you own or operate any of these type of vehicles, please make safety a priority.

Message To Parents

While there is no age requirement for driving an ATV or motorized bicycle, this does not mean a child of any age can safely operate one. It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure their children are prepared mentally and physically to drive an ATV or motorized bicycle. These vehicles come in many sizes, and it is important to match the rider with the ATV or motorized bicycle. The Patrol strongly urges parents to have their children attend a certified safety course. As with operating any vehicle, safety should come first.

- Reflective material and/or lights on any part of the bicyclist's pedals, crank arms, shoes, or lower leg, must be visible from the front and the rear at night under normal atmospheric conditions on a straight, level, unlighted roadway when viewed by a vehicle driver under the lawful lower beams of vehicle headlights at 200 feet; and
- Reflective material and/or lights visible on each side of the bicycle or bicyclist and must be visible at night under normal atmospheric conditions on a straight, level, unlighted roadway when viewed by a vehicle driver under the lawful lower beams of vehicle headlights at three hundred feet. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to motorized bicycles which comply with National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration regulations relating to reflectors on motorized bicycles.
- The operator must follow the rules of the road (stop signs, signaling, speed limits, etc.)
- No motorized bicycle may be operated on any public thoroughfare located within this state designated as part of the federal interstate highway system.
- Every person operating a bicycle or motorized bicycle at less than the posted speed or slower than the flow of traffic upon a street or highway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as safe, exercise due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction, except when making a left turn, when avoiding hazardous conditions, when the lane is too narrow to share with another vehicle, or when on a one-way street. Bicyclists may ride abreast when not impeding other vehicles.



Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (Section 304.033 RSMo)

Definition: Any motorized vehicle manufactured and used exclusively for off-highway use which is more than 50 inches, but no more than 80 inches in width, with an unladen dry weight of 3,500 pounds or less, traveling on four or more nonhighway tires, and which may have access to ATV trails. (Section 301.010 RSMo) Width is measured from outside of the tire rim to outside of tire rim.

- Can be operated on the highway if owned and operated by a government entity for official use.
- Can only be operated within three miles of the operator's primary residence (applies to any highway). Can only be operated within the city limits if the city authorizes its operation.
- Can be operated on the highway beyond the three-mile limit for agricultural purposes or industrial on-premises purposes.
- The operator must have a valid driver license when being operated on a highway.
- A valid driver license is NOT required when operated by handicapped persons for short distances occasionally only on the state's secondary roads (state's lettered routes).
- Must display a lighted headlamp and a lighted tail lamp while operated upon a highway.
- The operator must wear a seat belt while operating a recreational off-highway vehicle on a highway.
- Must be equipped with a roll bar or roll cage while operated on a highway.
- License plates and insurance are not required.
- Municipalities can issue permits to operate within the city limits (any highway).

- Counties may issue permits to operate on county-maintained roads.
- Cannot be operated while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Operator must obey the rules of the road (use turn signal, obey stop signs, etc.).
- Cannot operate in a stream or river unless the waterway flows within the boundaries of land the operator owns, or upon the land owned by another for agricultural purposes with the permission from the landowner.



Motorized Bicycle (Section 307.180 RSMo)

Definition: Any two- or three-wheeled device having an automatic transmission and a motor with a cylinder capacity of not more than 50 cubic centimeters, which produces less than three gross brake horsepower, and can propel the device at a maximum speed of not more than 30 mph on level ground. A motorized bicycle shall be considered a motor vehicle for purposes of any homeowners' or renters' insurance policy. (Section 307.180 RSMo)

- A valid operator's license is required to operate on any highway. (Section 307.195 RSMo)
- An endorsement for the operation of a motorcycle is NOT required.
- A safety helmet is NOT required, but is recommended.
- License plates and insurance are NOT required.
- Shall be equipped with a brake or brakes which will enable its driver to stop the bicycle or motorized bicycle within 25 feet from a speed of 10 mph on dry, level, clean pavement. (Section 307.183 RSMo)
- If operated on the highway between one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise:
 - A front-facing lamp on the front or carried by the rider which shall emit a white light visible at night under normal atmospheric conditions on a straight, level, unlighted roadway at 500 feet, ALSO
 - A rear-facing red reflector, at least two square inches in reflective surface area, or a rear-facing red lamp, on the rear which shall be visible at night under normal atmospheric conditions on a straight, level, unlighted roadway when viewed by a vehicle driver under the lower beams of vehicle headlights at 600 feet, ALSO

Utility Vehicle (Section 304.032 RSMo)

- A bicycle safety flag is required to be mounted on the rear of the vehicle for operation on the highway. Must extend not less than seven feet above the ground, be triangular, have an area of not less than 30 square inches, and shall be day-glow in color.
- Helmets are required for drivers under 18 years old.
- No passengers are allowed, except for farm purposes, unless the seat is designed to carry more than one passenger.
- Cannot operate in a stream or river, unless the waterway flows within the boundaries of land the operator owns, or upon land owned by another for agricultural purposes with the permission from the landowner.
- Must have a lighted headlamp and taillamp at any time it is operated on the highway or street. (Section 307.198 RSMo)
- Must display an equilateral triangle on the rear of the vehicle at least two feet above the road. It shall be fluorescent yellow-orange and have a reflective red border at least one inch in width. Each side shall measure at least 10 inches. (Section 307.198 RSMo)
- Must have a braking system maintained in good operating condition. (Section 307.198 RSMo)
- Must have an adequate muffler system in good working order, and a US Forest Service-qualified spark arrester. (Section 307.198 RSMo)
- Must be registered with the Department of Revenue (sticker). (Section 301.707 RSMo)



Definition: Any motorized vehicle manufactured and used exclusively for off-highway use which is more than 50 inches, but no more than 80 inches in width, with an unladen dry weight of 3,500 pounds or less, traveling on four or six wheels, to be used primarily for landscaping, lawn care, or maintenance purposes. (Section 301.010 RSMo) Width is measured from the outside of tire rim to outside of tire rim. Can be operated on the highway if owned and operated by a governmental entity for official use.

- Can be operated on the highway for agricultural purposes or industrial on-premises purposes between official sunrise and sunset. (Can operate at night if equipped with proper lighting.)
- The driver must possess a valid driver license to operate on the highway.
- A valid driver license is NOT required when operated by handicapped persons for short distances occasionally, only on the state's secondary roads (state's lettered routes), and only between the hours of sunrise and sunset.
- Cities may issue special permits to operate on the highways within city limits by licensed driver.
- Counties may issue special permits to operate on county-maintained roads.
- Municipalities may by resolution or ordinance allow utility vehicle operation on the streets or highways under the governing body's jurisdiction. Any person operating a UTV pursuant to a municipal resolution or ordinance shall maintain proof of financial responsibility. (Section 303.160 RSMo)
- Cannot be operated at speeds greater than 45 miles per hour.
- Cannot be operated while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- Operator must obey the rules of the road (use turn signal, obey stop signs, etc.).
- A slow-moving triangle is required only if operating under 25 mph after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise. This does not apply to dirt or gravel surfaced roads. (Section 307.127 RSMo)
- Cannot operate in a stream or river, unless the waterway flows within the boundaries of land, which the operator owns, or upon the land owned by another for agricultural purposes with the permission from the landowner.



All-Terrain Vehicle (Section 304.013 RSMo)

Definition: Any motorized vehicle manufactured and used exclusively for off-highway use, with an unladen dry weight of 1,500 pounds or less, traveling on three, four, or more nonhighway tires, with either a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering, OR a width of 50 inches or less measured from outside of tire rim to outside of tire rim, regardless of seating or steering arrangement. (Section 301.010 RSMo) Can be operated on the highway if owned and operated by a governmental entity for official use.

- Can be operated on the highway for agricultural purposes or industrial on-premises purposes between official sunrise and sunset.
- The operator must possess a valid driver license to operate on the highway.
- A valid driver license is NOT required when operated by handicapped persons for short distances occasionally, only on the state's secondary roads (state's lettered routes), and only between the hours of sunrise and sunset.
- Cities may issue special permits to operate on the highways within city limits by licensed drivers.
- Counties may issue special permits to operate on county-maintained roads.
- Municipalities may by resolution or ordinance allow ATV vehicle operation on the streets or highways under the governing body's jurisdiction. Any person operating a ATV pursuant to a municipal resolution or ordinance shall maintain proof of financial responsibility. (Section 303.160 RSMo)
- Cannot be operated on the highway at speeds greater than 30 mph.
- Cannot be operated while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Operator must obey the rules of the road (use turn signal, obey stop signs, etc.).